

Message Text

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FOLLOWING IS THE REPORTING CABLE FOR THE PLENARY
MEETING, FEBRUARY 17, 1978

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, XO

SUBJECT: US-USSR INDIAN OCEAN ARMS CONTROL TALKS:
REPORTING CABLE, PLENARY MEETING, FEBRUARY 17, 1978

SUMMARY - IN FINAL PLENARY US REITERATED ITS CONCERN OVER
SOVIET ACTIVITIES IN THE HORN OF AFRICA AND THE RELATED INCREASE
IN NAVAL PRESENCE, NOTING THAT IF CURRENT SOVIET ACTIVITIES
WOULD BE PERMITTED UNDER STABILIZATION THEN AN AGREEMENT WOULD NOT
LAST AND "FEW WOULD MOURN ITS PASSING." SOVIETS STRESSED PROBLEMS
THAT WOULD ARISE IF PROGRESS IN ARMS CONTROL AGREEMENTS IS TIED TO
EXTERNAL POLITICAL EVENTS AND NOTED THAT THEY HAD NOT DONE SO.
EACH SIDE RESTATED ITS POSITION ON STRATEGIC FORCES AND DIEGO GARCIA
CONSTRUCTION.

PLENARY MEETING - FEBRUARY 17, 1978 2:30 P.M. SOVIET EMBASSY

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AFTER HEARING WARNKE'S SUMMARY STATEMENT (SENT SEPTTEL) MENDELEVICH
IN TURN SUMMARIZED THE RESULTS OF THE ROUND IN THREE CATEGORIES:
PRACTICAL, MATTERS OF PRINCIPAL AND POLITICAL.

2. ON PRACTICAL MATTERS HE NOTED THAT BOTH SIDES HAD ATTEMPTED
TO ELABORATE A JOINT TEXT AND THAT EXPERTS GROUPS HAD MET AND THEIR

WORK HAD RESULTED IN A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF EACH SIDE'S POSITION. HE REGRETTED THE US SIDE WAS NOT PREPARED TO EXCHANGE A FORMAT OF ITS APPROACH TO SUPPLEMENTAL STATEMENTS. SOVIETS HOPED THIS WOULD BE DONE EARLY IN THE NEXT ROUND. BOTH SIDES NEED TO CONTINUE WORK ON SUCH TECHNICAL ISSUES AS TRANSIT AND AUXILIARIES. THERE WAS A USEFUL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON THE DEFINITION OF THE AREA. BOTH SIDES SHOULD LOOK FOR A COMPROMISE. HE ENCOURAGED THE US GOVERNMENT TO UNDER-
STAND THE SOVIET POSITION ON ALLIES AND ADJACENT AREAS AND TO RECOGNIZE
THEIR LOGICAL ARGUMENTS. SOVIETS UNDERSTAND POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES CONNECTED WITH THESE ISSUES.

3. CONCERNING MATTERS OF PRINCIPLE UNFORTUNATELY HE SAW NO PROGRESS ON BASIC QUESTIONS. SOVIET SIDE DOES NOT UNDERSTAND HOW CONTINUATION OF CONSTRUCTION AT DIEGO GARCIA CAN BE RECONCILED WITH A STABILIZATION
AGREEMENT. COMPLETION OF DIEGO GARCIA INCREASES ASYMMETRY IN FAVOR OF THE UNITED STATES.

4. THE QUESTION OF STRATEGIC FORCES WAS THE KEY ISSUE RELATED TO THE QUESTION OF WHETHER OR NOT THERE WILL BE AN ARMS RACE AND MILITARY CONFRONTATION IN THE IO. THE SOVIETS UNDERSTAND THE US POSITION ON STRATEGIC AIRCRAFT BUT THE SSBN ELEMENT REMAINS UNCERTAIN. IN HIS VIEW IN RECENT DAYS THE US POSITION HAS BECOME LESS CLEAR AND HE DETECTS A TENDENCY FOR THE US TO RESERVE THE POSSIBILITY OF DEPLOY-
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MENT
OF SSBNS UNDER STABILIZATION. HE EVEN FELT THAT PERHAPS THE US HAD HAD DIFFICULTY IN PRESENTING A FORMAT FOR A SUPPLEMENTAL STATEMENT BECAUSE IT WAS UNCERTAIN HOW TO FIT ITS POSITION ON SSBNS INTO THE STATEMENT. HE STRESSED THAT AN AGREEMENT THAT DID NOT PREVENT AN ARMS RACE AND EVEN PERMITTED AN ENLARGEMENT OF ITS SCOPE WOULD HAVE NO SENSE AND WOULD ITSELF LEAD TO MILITARY CONFRONTATION. IF ONE SIDE DESIRES TO DEPLOY STRATEGIC FORCES IN THE IO THE OTHER SIDE WOULD OF NECESSITY TAKE MEASURES TO NEUTRALIZE THE THREAT TO SECURITY, THUS LEADING TO A LARGE-SCALE ARMS RACE IN THE AREA.

5. CONCERNING POLITICAL QUESTIONS HE NOTED THAT POLITICAL PROBLEMS EXTERNAL TO AN ARMS CONTROL AGREEMENT ALWAYS EXIST AND ARE SOMETIMES ACUTE. IT WAS COMMON KNOWLEDGE THAT BILATERAL ARMS CONTROL TALKS SUCCEED ONLY IF THEY ARE NOT CONNECTED DIRECTLY WITH OTHER POLITICAL ISSUES EVEN IF SUCH ISSUES ARE OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE. FOR EXAMPLE, SALT ONE COULD NOT HAVE BEEN COMPLETED IF THE SOVIET UNION HAD TIED IT TO THE VIETNAM WAR. SIMILARLY THERE WOULD BE NO ARMS CONTROL AGREEMENTS IF PROGRESS WERE TIED TO THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION. THE U
S
SEEMS TO BE TYING PROGRESS IN THIS NEGOTIATION TO DEVELOPMENTS IN THE HORN OF AFRICA. THERE IS NO BASIS FOR SUCH A TIE. THE US IS AWARE

OF THE SOVIET ASSESSMENT ON THE SITUATION AND OF POSSIBLE WAYS TO SETTLE THE CONFLICT. THE SOVIET SIDE HAS VOLUNTEERED INFORMATION THIS ROUND ON ITS MILITARY PRESENCE AND THIS HAS SHOWN THAT NOTHING EXTRAORDINARY IS TAKING PLACE. PERHAPS SOME CIRCLES IN THE UNITED STATES ATTEMPT TO RELATE THESE ISSUES IN ORDER TO WIN SOVIET CONCESSIONS ON ISSUES IN THE AGREEMENT. HE REPEATED THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAS NOT, DOES NOT AND WILL NOT TIE EXTERNAL POLITICAL EVENTS TO ARMS CONTROL NEGOTIATIONS. HE NOTED THAT WHEN THERE IS A DELAY IN REACHING AGREEMENTS THE SITUATION CHANGES AND REACHING AN AGREEMENT BECOMES MORE DIFFICULT, CITING THE DELAY IN REACHING THE NON-PROLIFERATION AGREEMENT.

6. AS TO THE PROSPECTS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS THE SOVIET UNION BELIEVES A SERIOUS AND REALISTIC AGREEMENT IS POSSIBLE, THAT A SUBSTANTIAL
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FOUNDATION HAS ALREADY BEEN LAID, BUT THERE ARE TWO OR THREE QUESTIONS WHICH NEED TO BE RESOLVED AT THE POLITICAL LEVEL BY THE TWO GOVERNMENTS. HE BELIEVES AN AGREEMENT COULD BE REACHED IN TWO TO THREE ADDITIONAL SESSIONS IF EACH LASTED FOUR TO FIVE WEEKS.

7. IN RESPONSE AMB WARNKE STATED THAT THIS NEGOTIATIONS IS DIRECTLY LINKED TO DEVELOPMENTS IN THE HORN WHICH ARE IN BASIC CONFLICT WITH WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE AND THAT CURRENT SOVIET ACTIVITIES ARE INCONSISTENT WITH STABILIZATION. IF CURRENT SOVIET ACTIVITIES WOULD BE PERMITTED UNDER STABILIZATION THAN AN AGREEMENT WOULD NOT LAST AND "FEW WOULD MOURN ITS PASSING."

8. HE SUGGESTED THAT ON THE QUESTIONS OF DIEGO GARCIA CONSTRUCTION AND STRATEGIC FORCES THE US POSITION IS IN FACT CLEAR BUT THAT THE SOVIETS DO NOT LIKE THAT POSITION. PLANNED CONSTRUCTION AT DIEGO GARCIA IS MODEST AND WOULD NOT CHANGE THE SIZE OR NATURE OF THE US MILITARY PRESENCE. SIMILARLY ON STRATEGIC FORCES THE US IS RESERVING ITS RIGHT TO DO WHAT IS CONSISTENT WITH THE PREVIOUS LEVEL AND COMPOSITION OF ITS FORCES. AS LONG AS WE DO NOT DO MORE, THEN US ACTIONS WOULD NOT INDUCE AN ARMS RACE, AND NO COMPENSATING SOVIET ACTION WOULD BE WARRANTED.

9. HE REITERATED THAT THE ALLIED FACTOR IS NOT RELEVANT TO OUR BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS. THE OVERALL PROVISIONS OF THE AGREEMENT INCLUDING THE CONSULTATIVE MECHANISM AND THE WITHDRAWAL
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CLAUSE AREA ADEQUATE TO MEET SOVIET CONCERNS.

10. IN CONCLUSION, MENDELEVICH STATED THAT THE SOVIET DELEGATION WILL HAVE SUGGESTIONS TO MAKE IN MOSCOW CONCERNING THE MAJOR OUTSTANDING ISSUES AND HOPES THAT THE US DELEGATION WILL FOLLOW THIS SAME PROCEDURE. HE FELT THAT THE TWO SIDES HAD MADE GOOD PROGRESS UNDER CONDITIONS WHICH WERE LESS THAN IDEAL.

WARNER

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